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Message Text

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APPROVED BY NEA/AFN:MWWILEY
AID/AFR/NARA:MWARD
AID/AFR/NARA:EDCONROY
AID/AFR/NARA:GEVARRATI
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, TBIO, TS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S INTEREST IN AMERICAN-TYPE HOSPITAL IN TUNISIA

REF; TUNIS 5869

1. EMBASSY/USAID ARGUMENTS IN REFTEL ARE PERSUASIVE IN MANY RESPECTS. AID/W'S REVIEW OF POSSIBILITIES FOR COMPOSITION OF HEALTH TEAM HAD ALREADY SUGGESTED DESIRABILITY OF OBTAINING SERVICES OF NON-USG EXPERTS.

2. IT IS ALSO DESIRE OF DEPARTMENT AND AID/W TO RETURN ACTION ON THIS SUBJECT TO TUNIS WHERE FOUNDATION HAS BEEN LAID FOR DIALOGUE WITH GOT ON REALISTIC POSSIBILITIES FOR ESTABLISHING AN AMERICAN-TYPE MEDICAL FACILITY. WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT AMBASSADOR HEDDA HAS BEEN DOING HIS JOB OF CARRYING OUT INSTRUCTIONS HE EVIDENTLY RECEIVED FROM PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, TUNISIAN EMBASSY HERE DOES NOT HAVE ANY EXPERTISE IN FIELD OF PUBLIC
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HEALTH AND IS NOT WELL PLACED TO CARRY ON SUCH DISCUSSIONS.

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3. PROJECT HOPE PRESIDENT WALSH HAS CONFIRMED HIS INSTITUTION'S READINESS TO SURVEY FEASIBILITY OF BUILDING AMERICAN-TYPE HOSPITAL IN TUNISIA. CONSEQUENTLY, DEPARTMENT SUGGESTS THAT AMBASSADOR MAKE FOLLOWING APPROACH AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF GOT: DEPARTMENT AND AID HAVE CONSIDERED HOW BEST TO EXAMINE WAYS IN WHICH AN AMERICAN-TYPE OF MEDICAL FACILITY MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED IN TUNISIA. IT IS OUR CONCLUSION THAT PROJECT HOPE HAS THE BEST AVAILABLE PERSONNEL TO MAKE SUCH A STUDY IN COOPERATION WITH THE GOT. IF GOT AGREES, DEPARTMENT WOULD BE PREPARED ON BEHALF OF AMBASSADOR TO ASK PROJECT HOPE PRESIDENT WALSH TO FIELD TEAM OF PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS PREPARED TO STUDY HOW AN AMERICAN-STYLE MEDICAL FACILITY COULD BE ESTABLISHED AND MAINTAINED AT COSTS AND ON SCALE APPROPRIATELY MATCHED TO TUNISIAN CAPACITIES AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES. THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE THE TEAM OF PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS DISCUSSED BY AMBASSADOR HEDDA AND AID ADMINISTRATOR PARKER.

4. SUBSEQUENT TO BEING INFORMED OF GOT READINESS TO FOLLOW THIS COURSE, DEPARTMENT WOULD RELAY REQUEST TO WALSH AS GOT REQUEST HAVING SUPPORT OF AMBASSADOR. WE WOULD THEN ADVISE AMBASSADOR HEDDA THAT THIS IS BEING DONE AND SUGGEST THAT HE CONTACT WALSH.

5. FYI: DEPT AND AID WILL CAUTION WALSH AGAINST MAKING ANY FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS IN NAME USG TO GOT OFFICIALS EITHER FOR CONSTRUCTION OR FOR SUBSEQUENT OPERATING EXPENSES. WE WILL ALSO STRESS IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING ANY PROPOSAL WITHIN MODEST BOUNDS. INGERSOLL

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